

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 IGA-02 /065 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/IRN:MLGREENE:AMF

APPROVED BY NEA/IRN:CWNAAS

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P 152247Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

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FROM NAAS FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: MASS, IR

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE

TEXT OF LEAD FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN SEPTEMBER 15 WASHINGTON  
STAR GIVEN BELOW. HEADLINES WERE: "PENTAGON PROBES FORCES  
IN IRAN," "RECORDS OF MILITARY ADVISORY UNIT DESTROYED,  
APPARENTLY TO THWART INVESTIGATION."

"THE FINANCIAL RECORDS OF THE TROUBLED U.S. MILITARY MISSION  
IN TEHRAN HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO THWART  
A PROBE BY SERVICE INVESTIGATORS, ACCORDING TO WELL-PLACED  
SOURCES.

THE RECORDS HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE AIR FORCE OFFICE OF  
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS, WHICH OFTEN CONDUCTS INVESTIGATIONS  
FOR THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT. BUT THE CHIEF OF THE MISSION,  
AIR FORCE MAJ. GEN. KENNETH P. MILES, ORDERED THE RECORDS  
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RETURNED TO THE OFFICER WHO HAD HAD CUSTODY OF THEM, AC-

CORDING TO THESE SOURCES.

THE OSI HANDED THEM OVER AND THEY WERE SUBSEQUENTLY DESTROYED ACCORDING TO SEPARATE ACCOUNTS OF THE EPISODE, WHICH OCCURRED LAST MONTH.

THE DESTRUCTION CAUSED REVERBERATIONS THAT REACHED THE PENTAGON, WHERE THE EPISODE CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF DEFENSE SECRETARY DONALD H. RUMSFELD.

A NEW INVESTIGATION INTO THE ENTIRE MATTER HAS BEEN ORDERED, AND ONE SOURCE SAYS A REPORT IS EXPECTED "PRETTY DAMN QUICK."

THE RECORDS IN QUESTION ARE THE BOOKKEEPING--EXPENSE ACCOUNTS AND THE LIKE--FOR THE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP IN IRAN, WHICH IS THE LARGEST SUCH GROUP IN ANY NATION OVERSEAS. THEY DO NOT INVOLVE THE BOOKKEEPING ON THE 10 BILLION DOLLARS IN U.S. ARMS SALES TO IRAN.

THE RECORDS IN QUESTION ARE SAID TO INVOLVE FUNDS AT LEAST "IN THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS", ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT OF THE EPISODE. IT WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY CLEAR WHAT PROMPTED THE INVESTIGATION OF THE MAAG'S BOOKS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE MAAG, AS SUCH GROUPS ARE INVARIABLY CALLED, EMPLOYS 191 MILITARY PERSONNEL, 18 U.S. CIVILIAN PERSONNEL AND 39 LOCAL PERSONS. THE HISTORY OF THE MAAG IN TEHRAN HAS BEEN ONE OF CONTROVERSY THAT HAS BEDEVILED THE STEADILY INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY INHERENT IN THE LARGE U.S. ARMS DEALINGS.

THE RECORDS IN QUESTION ARE THOUGHT MAINLY TO DEAL WITH THE TENURE OF MILES AS MAAG CHIEF. HIS PREDECESSOR, MAJ. GEN. HOYT S. VANDENBERG, JR., WAS ABRUPTLY YANKED FROM THE JOB IN JANUARY AFTER ONLY FIVE MONTHS IN TEHRAN.

OFFICIALLY, THE PENTAGON SAID VANDENBERG WAS REMOVED FROM TEHRAN AFTER IT WAS DETERMINED THAT HE LACKED THE PROGRAM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANAGEMENT AND WEAPONS MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SUDDENLY DECIDED IT NEEDED IN GREATER QUANTITIES IN IRAN.

OTHER SOURCES, HOWEVER, SAID THAT VANDENBERG WAS YANKED BEFORE HIS OBVIOUS DISLIKE FOR THE IRANIANS COULD CAUSE TROUBLE. OTHERS SUGGESTED THAT IT HAD ALREADY CAUSED CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE.

ONE SOURCE SUGGESTED THAT ONE REASON NO SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE BEEN MOVED OR SUSPENDED DURING THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY IN THE MAAG IS THAT "THEY'VE HAD SO MUCH TURMOIL ALREADY."

THE MAGNITUDE OF ARMS SALES TO IRAN, THE OVERSIGHT OF THOSE SALES BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE ABILITY OF THE IRANIANS TO ABSORB AND OPERATE THE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS THEY ARE BUYING HAVE BECOME MATTERS OF GROWING CONCERN.

A RECENT STAFF REPORT OF THE SENATE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE SUB-COMMITTEE SAID ARMS SALES TO TEHRAN WENT "OUT OF CONTROL" IN 1972. THE REPORT QUESTIONED THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT. HOWEVER, THE PENTAGON OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN ARMS SALES YESTERDAY DENIED THAT CHARGE." ROBINSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, RECORDS DISPOSITION, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, MILITARY ADVISERS, INVESTIGATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 15 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** SmithRJ  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE228720  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** MLGREENE:AMF  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760349-0370  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760956/aaaabvur.tel  
**Line Count:** 131  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** SmithRJ  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 JUN 2004 by greenet>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2004 by SmithRJ>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE TEXT OF LEAD FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN SEPTEMBER 15 WASHINGTON STAR GIVEN BELOW.  
HEADLINES WERE: "PENTAGON PROB  
**TAGS:** MASS, IR, US, WASHINGTON STAR  
**To:** TEHRAN  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006